



 **PathMotion**

Static Recruitment Marketing is Dead

Focus on what candidates are asking your employees

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the traditional topics

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INTRODUCTION

The most successful companies are powered by knowing insights into what candidates are asking and acting on those insights in their employer brand strategy.

Listening to candidates and honing in on the career topics they want information on has never been more challenging and critical to the future success of companies. Never has this ever been so evident than during the COVID-19 pandemic. We have undoubtedly fallen into unknown territory.

To that end, we conducted some research to better understand exactly what hot topics job candidates have been asking for employee insights on over the past three years.

We collected 13,079 questions asked by candidates to employees of companies and 1.5 million views from candidates across these questions on the PathMotion platform. Companies which use our platform vary and cover 15 sectors worldwide.

We then used our AI Models to group the questions into topics. From there, we identified the top 5 most thought-provoking insights we found.

Our latest research highlights how companies can best provide recruitment marketing content to answer candidates' questions, and most effectively utilise the content. The research also provides you with the opportunity to monitor and act quickly on the topics candidates want employee insights on.

Through linking topics on what candidates are asking questions on and bringing insights together in ways that make it easy for talent attraction and employer branding leaders to create relevant content that attracts the right candidates, companies can not only measure the impact of changes and continually strive to improve the candidate experience but they avoid wasting time and cost on content providers.

However, through not doing this they miss the opportunity to show candidates what's great about working in their company through discussing topics candidates ask about, as well as, leading a candidate to form their opinion on a company from other sources like review sites which may not reflect all of the strengths of the company. Ultimately if they move forward without employee stories on key topics which candidates want to delve into, many companies will continue to lose out on candidates to their competitors.

From this research, you can put our insights into practice ultimately, improving your employer brand strategy and content while ensuring your company is flexible, agile and responsive to candidate insights.

An employer branding strategy allows you to control and positively change the dialogue surrounding your company to ensure higher talent acquisition and retention. At its most basic, employer branding is how you market your company to job seekers and what employees say about your company as a workplace ^[source]

Keep reading to discover the top 5 insights into what topics candidates want insights on and how this will shape your employer brand strategy, now and in the long term.

We will show you how to put this into practice with consideration of how to allocate your time and budget on content creation, technologies, and strategies.



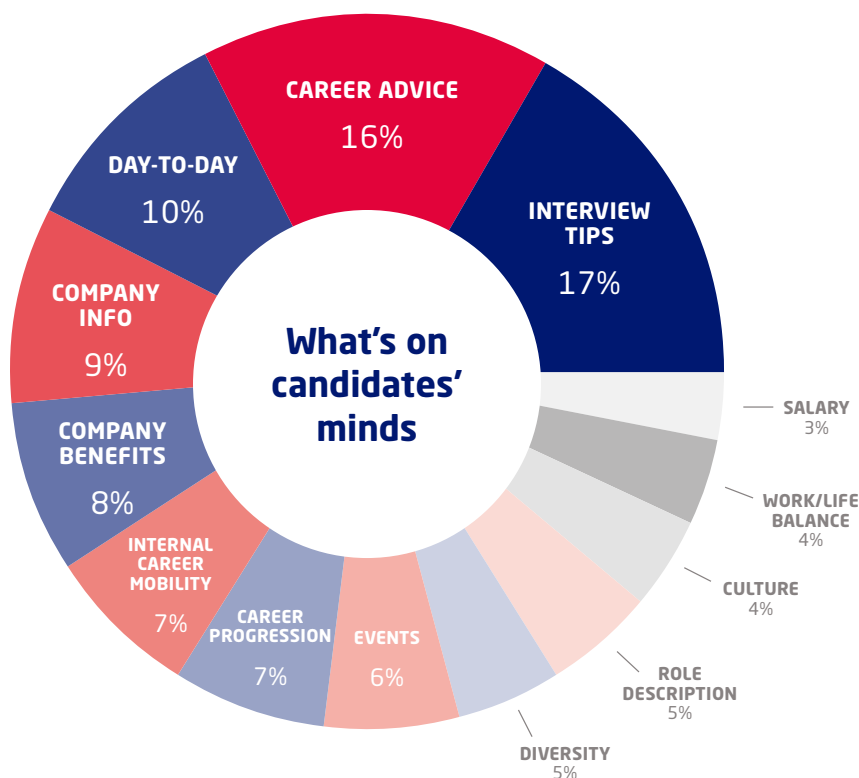
1

**DON'T FOCUS
ONLY ON THE
TRADITIONAL
TOPICS**

Although our research discovered candidates continue to ask questions on traditional topics (see chart below) such as role description, career advice, interview tips and company information, these only represent less than 50% of the questions that candidates are asking. What's more, the other 50% of wide-ranging topics on candidates' minds such as diversity, challenges experienced within the role and work-life balance are simply not answered.

Furthermore, our research in 2020, during the recent months of the COVID-19 pandemic, has seen an increase in 40% of questions being left unanswered. This shows the problem has grown during the crisis, at a time when candidates need transparency and insight most.

As well as creating sufficient content on high volume topics such as specific role and company information, there is a clear indication that it is essential to also take action, consider and create content on these neglected but also important topics, such as work-life balance, diversity and challenges experienced within the role. This is key to ensure your candidates don't lose interest and leave your career site empty-handed to go elsewhere to find information on these topics.



How best to answer candidates' questions...

As with all branding, crafting a strong employer brand is about good storytelling. It's about how you want your organisation to be perceived in the marketplace, using specific messaging to help attract the kind of prospects you're looking for. But also, it's about living out that story. Satisfied employees are your loudest speaker box, particularly in an age of social media and user-generated feedback where employers aren't always completely in control of their own reputation. [\[source\]](#)

This approach also needs to be twofold: the topics need to cover the granularity of the questions and the content of the answers need to be used to improve topics such as diversity which enhance your employer brand strategy. Being prepared to answer granular questions ensures career-related social posts focus on the topics that matter to candidates which in turn, drives engagement.

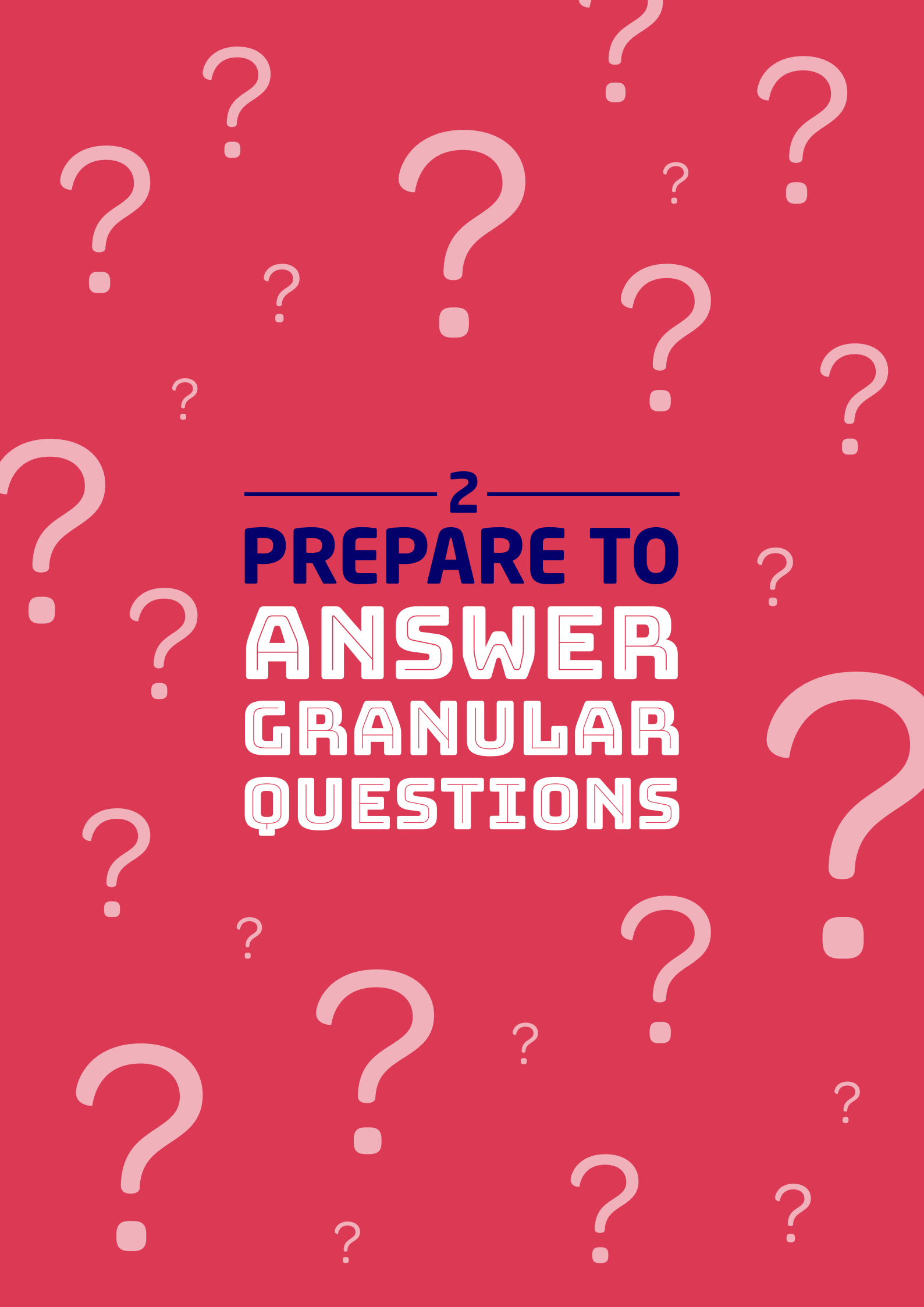
Employees are in the best place to answer the remaining 50% of questions and this is the key reason why it is essential employees are involved in answering them. Furthermore, the answers employees give do not need to be perfect - they can discuss how the organisation is looking to progress too. After all companies don't need to wait to have the best policies in place before answering candidates questions as this is not what candidates expect, at least not the candidates who will stay in your company for a long time once they are in (the example answers provided later in this eBook demonstrate this point).

Previous research from last year featured in our [Authentic Employer Branding: How to make it work with Storytelling eBook](#) also highlighted why employee stories drive higher and more constant candidate immersion, and ultimately, candidate conversion. The resounding evidence as to why candidates relate to personal stories is overwhelming. Real employee stories are one of the most powerful ways of communicating your organisation's values, goals, and mission.

To engage with candidates, organizations should craft social media content to include topics such as diversity, corporate culture and professional development

[source]

According to a survey conducted by Edelman, your employees are the most trusted source of information about your firm. Conveniently, they're also best-placed to respond to most of the top questions that candidates have about what it's like to work for you - **Talentboard, 2015**

The background is a solid red color with numerous question marks scattered across it. The question marks vary in size and are rendered in a light pink or white color. Some are large and prominent, while others are small and subtle. They are distributed throughout the page, creating a pattern of inquiry.

— 2 —
**PREPARE TO
ANSWER
GRANULAR
QUESTIONS**

With such a wide array of topics candidates want to ask, be prepared to answer granular questions on the subtopics within them. Wide topics such as diversity should not be given a single-minded, one-faceted approach such as a simple mention on your corporate website, stock photos and quotes. Candidates require information on the subtopics within diversity as we have seen in our previous research in our [What's on Candidates' minds – Diversity recruiting eBook](#) and from the following diverse set of granular questions with examples of answers we have seen from the PathMotion platform:

What is the ratio of ethnic minority partners?
What do you do to promote more BAME lawyers to top positions?

Thank you very much for your question, the topic of which was discussed at a leadership meeting this week. Currently, 6% of the London office's partners are from an ethnic minority background. Across all other grades and roles, it's 17%. We know this percentage is not where it should be or where we want to be and as such, are in the process of launching a new strategic approach to drive ethnic diversity within the office. There is a huge volume of support across the firm to increase our efforts here. Like many of our competitors, we are working hard to address this – it's a challenge across the sector but this doesn't "make it ok". We're already doing a lot at the recruitment stage – we recruit 35-40% BAME trainees and we are focusing on ensuring we retain and progress those individuals through the firm. We also have our BAME trainee mentoring programme which pairs future joiners and current trainees with individuals from across the firm to inspire, encourage and develop our future workforce and next generation of leaders."

Are diverse educational backgrounds considered?

Hi there, thanks for your question. We operate an open access to all policy and we don't screen out any applications only on your academic performance at GCSE, A-Level or Degree.

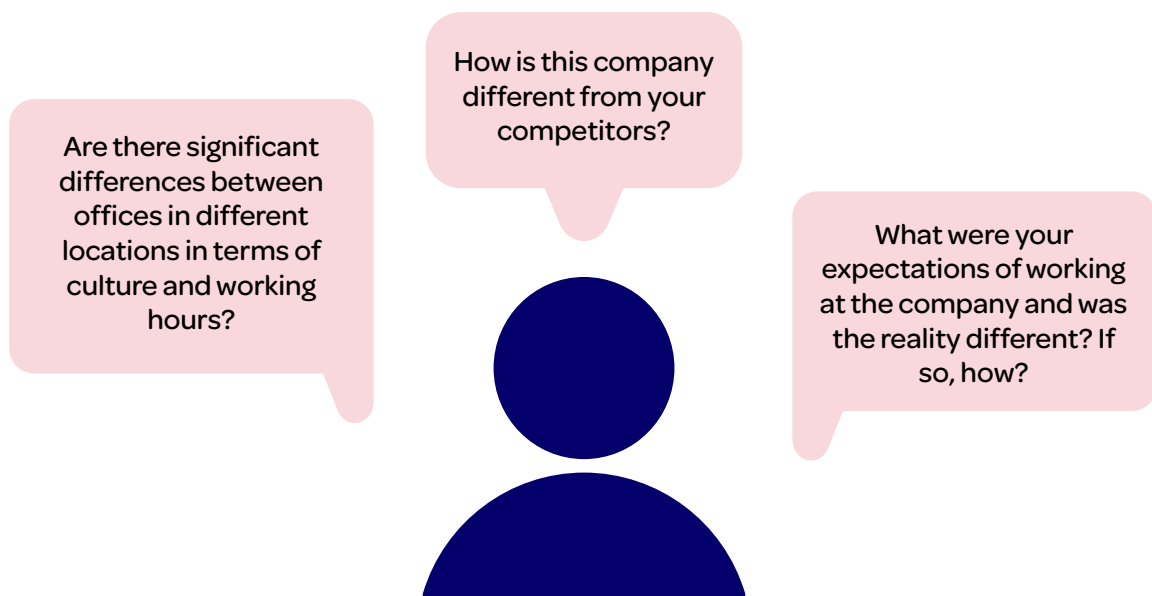
Tell me some stories of things you do to make LGBT employees feel at ease at work?

Hi, We work with the charity Stonewall to make our company a more inclusive workplace and last year, our German BU launched the "Rainbow Network" to raise awareness of the importance of an inclusive culture for our LGBT colleagues. As well as this as part of our Just Be network everyone is encouraged to 'Be yourself, be valued and belong'. We have celebrated Pride this month on site by having a site BBQ and activities.

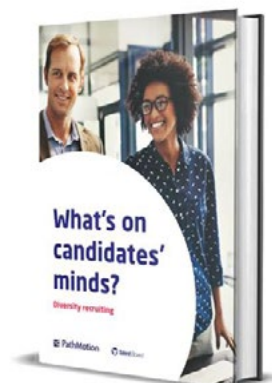
What's it like being a woman in training and on exercise when it comes to feminine hygiene?

Hygiene for everyone, both men and women, is really important when deployed. It's what keeps us healthy and allows us to continue doing our jobs. You will always have access to water when on training or deployments and will always have opportunities to wash and keep clean. You will also be able to dispose of any sanitary products discreetly. If you find that you are anxious about this, or you have any more questions when you start your training, there will generally be a female member of staff at your training establish you will be more that happy to talk to you about it and share some advice and experience. Definitely don't let it be something that puts you off applying as I have never found it to be an issue. Katie

However, this also applies to all of the other topics we highlighted in 'Insight 1' such as 'company information' with granular questions on subtopics such as the following :



If you're not answering the questions at a granular level such as the examples above on 'Diversity' and 'Company information', and providing the detail you simply are not answering your candidates' questions and will lose them. As we also highlighted in our [What's on Candidates' minds – Diversity recruiting eBook](#) 57% of employers believe most of their diverse candidates are lost before they click apply after visiting their career site - you need to be transparent and give them the platform to ask all their granular questions in order for them to make an informed and educated decision before applying.





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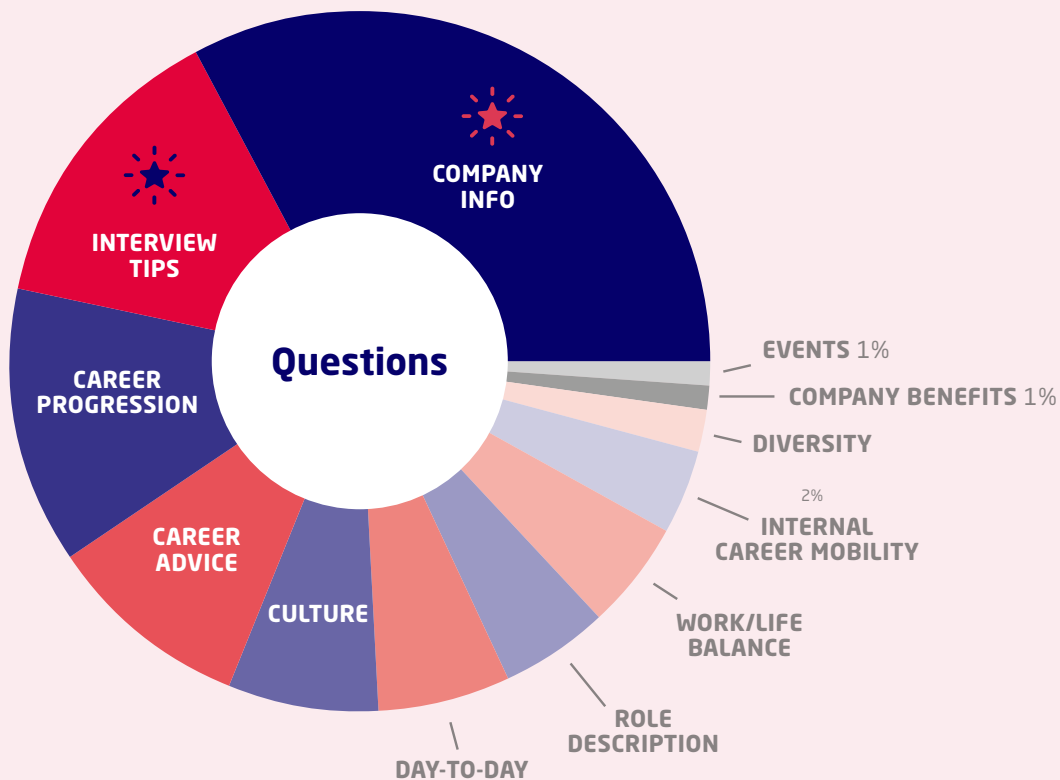


ADD VALUE:
HELP CANDIDATES
**IN THEIR
CAREERS**



Companies need to add value to the candidate experience and go beyond the traditional question areas, to help candidates in their careers.

Our research found that Interview tips and career advice both rank in the top five topics that candidates want answers on:



This shows us that from providing insights and focusing on wider in-demand areas such as career progression and career advice, it enhances the candidate experience through adding informative value. For example, candidates may need details on where they will eventually end up in their career path if they join the company. Focusing on those wider areas candidates really want answers on is an approach which enhances the **candidate experience** through adding value to the candidate. Similarly, your company can add value to the candidate experience through commenting on career advice, opportunities for training, mentoring candidates and so on. This will strengthen your employer brand value, deepen engagement with candidates, and subsequently will attract the right candidates for your company.

Improving the candidate experience is now more important than ever and is aligned with our previous findings on why the candidate experience matters, seen in our [Content is King – Human is Ace: The Truth About Candidate Experience eBook](#). We find that 99% of those surveyed believe improving candidate experience would “enhance” and “protect” their brand.

Interview tips (another hot topic for candidates) also provides value. Offering advice like interview tips is invaluable insider advice that can help to assist and prepare candidates for interviews with the company and beyond. This topic presents the potential for a wide range of questions, seen from questions asked on the PathMotion platform alone. The following examples show the breadth of what these queries could be:

What should I expect and prepare for the video interview for a financial crime apprenticeship?

The video interview is an opportunity for us to get to know you a little better. It's also a great way for us to learn why you're interested in the role and your motivations for applying. Our biggest piece of advice is don't worry – we completely understand that you might feel nervous or awkward whilst recording your answers! It's a 30-40 minute video, which starts with a welcome from our graduates. You will then be asked a couple of multiple-choice questions, which are focused around your eligibility for the role. There is also a practice question, to help you warm up! You will then be given the option to begin the video interview. One of our graduates will ask you a question (which will also appear on your screen, so don't worry about needing to write these down) and you will have up to three minutes to answer each question. We recommend doing some prior research around financial crime and our apprenticeship schemes, as this will help you prepare for the interview.

Is it the Watson Glaser test that you use for applications?

We don't use Watson Glaser - our test is bespoke! The test comprises of three types of question: situational-judgment, verbal reasoning and personality / behavioural questions. The SJT questions are bespoke and are reflective of the types of scenario trainees can expect to experience if they were to join the firm. The blended nature of the test is designed to enable applicants to demonstrate their problem-solving and verbal reasoning skills, as well as their approach to scenarios relevant to the work at the firm. The test takes approximately 30 – 35 minutes, although there is no strict time limit so candidates may complete the assessment at their own speed. The completion time is, however, recorded and will be taken into account during scoring.

Is there anything in particular a non-law student can do to better prepare for the case study interview?

We don't expect non-law students to have the same level of legal knowledge as someone who has studied law. We'd recommend brushing up on basic contract and tort knowledge ahead of the interview to help you along the way.

Not answering these questions, which help educate and mentor candidates in their careers, is a missed opportunity and a costly one at that. Always be informative and helpful so that talented candidates will see no need to apply to competitors or visit third party sites.

4

**DON'T SHY AWAY FROM
CHALLENGING
QUESTIONS**

Not only do you need to let candidates ask the questions – you should be prepared for candidates to ask tough and challenging questions! Our research shows a growing trend where an increasing level of candidates want to know about the true ‘life in the organisation’, including work culture, diversity, role progression and work/life balance etc. (see chart on ‘Questions’ below).

Again, employee feedback and insights are the one true single source of truth for candidates on such topics. We must remember that ‘employee stories are immersive, the careers site is not’ which is highlighted in our previous [Authentic Employer Branding: How to make it work with Storytelling eBook](#). Candidates want to know about the challenges employees face and this is particularly prevalent in the Tech industry where employees are revealing these challenges for specific roles. We can expect this burgeoning trend to spread to other industries too.

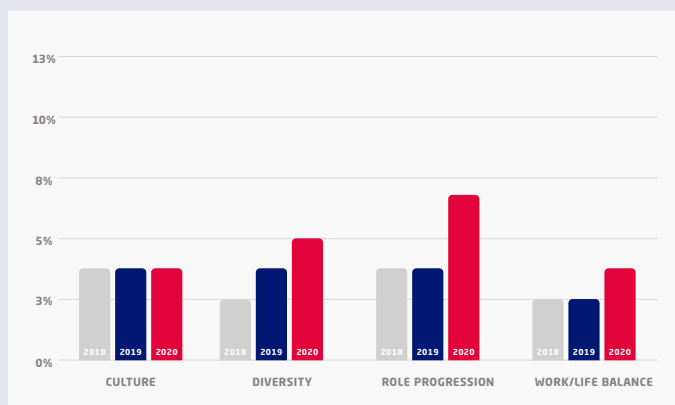
The old adage “The devil is in the detail” is very relevant in this movement towards more subjective topics. Details are increasingly important to candidates and they now need far more than just facts. Candidates want to hear from the employees themselves on how company policies actually play out for them during their time in the company, so much so that they even openly ask about topics like challenges, when given the opportunity. If the topics and questions aren’t available, the candidate will soon lose interest in your company, **so you need to let employees answer the questions**

Supporting candidates’ interest in the challenges and true workplace environment, we have seen a significant increase in candidates viewing answers to related questions. There has been the biggest percentage increase on the topic of diversity over the last year (see chart on ‘Views’ below) while the other topics of work culture and work/life balance have seen more steady increases. Candidates’ interests are indeed evolving and they are becoming more forthcoming about what they want to know.

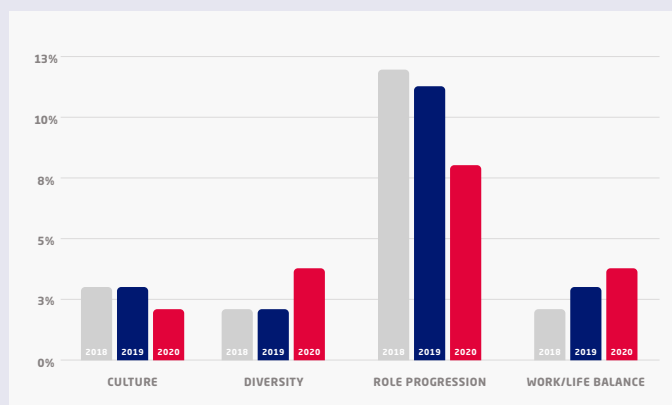
These topics are key for the employer too, through answering questions on work culture, it’s not only essential to get the right candidate to fit and grow your culture to obtain success but ultimately their answers will shape your employer brand strategy and content going forward.

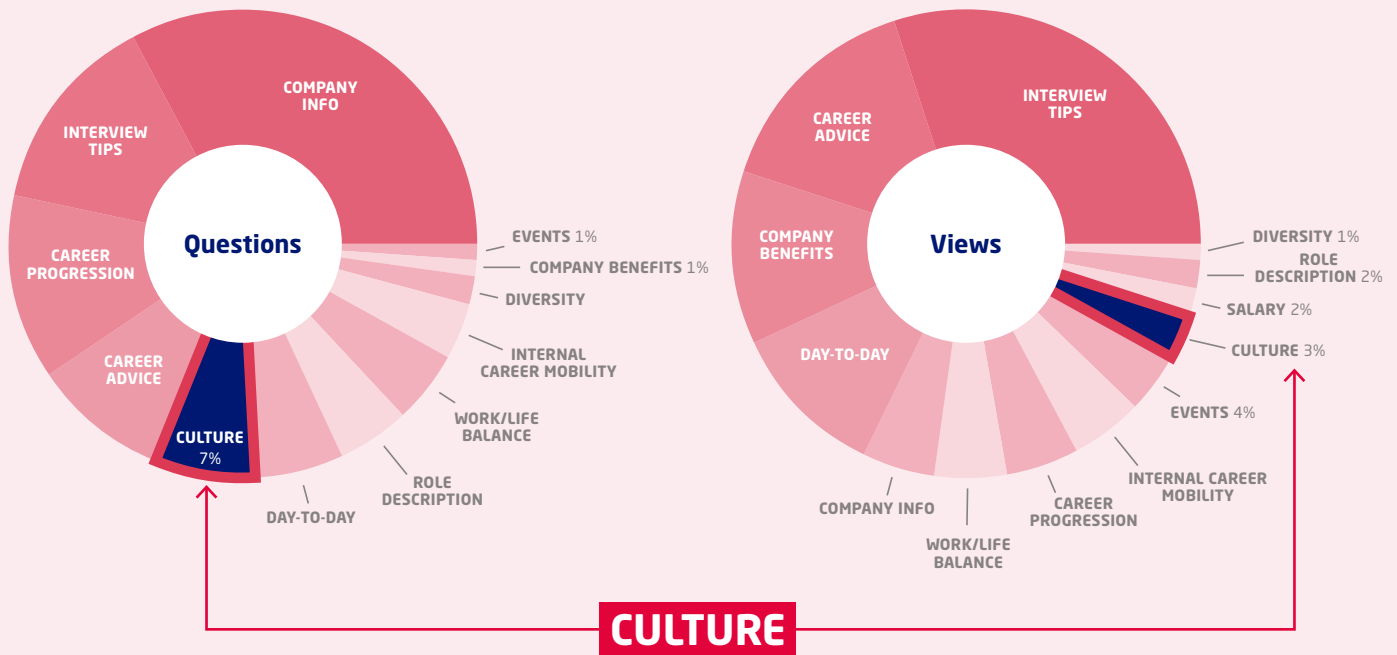
Through employee stories, candidates can gain unique insights into a company’s work culture and their accommodation to individuals’ needs. An example of this is stories on flexible working. Although not an exclusive factor, the CIPD have highlighted flexible working as a contributing aspect in a Positive work culture: flexible working was seen as creating a positive working culture, in which employees feel valued: ‘A positive impact of flexible working on morale and how people feel about where they work.’ ^[source]

% of questions by topic



% of views by topic





However, the research findings also tell us that many candidates still seem hesitant to broach topics companies don't typically address. Candidate's fear asking about sensitive financial information like salaries, culture and day-to-day life in the organisation, yet when they are asked, they receive a high volume of views.

Being open about culture, values, and expectations will help candidates self-select – and make you a top choice for candidates who share your vision. Confirm on both ends that the candidate and company are looking for the same things for growth and goals. [\[source\]](#)

For example, in the consulting industry (see chart above), only 5% of discussions are on company culture yet the existing discussions take up 12.5% of total views. Undoubtedly this imbalance reveals that there is an appetite for content on company culture and furthermore it reinforces the importance of transparency in having this information readily available to candidates without waiting for them to ask.

You need to let the content be available for everyone. 96% of job seekers say it's important to work for a company that embraces transparency. [\[source\]](#)



Get candidates excited – showcase your employee brand and company culture.

If you want to make sure you hire the top tier, you need to make candidates WANT to come and work for you. Get them excited from the off, in fact get them going before they even apply.



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ADDRESS
HOT
QUESTIONS
IN YOUR SECTOR

Analysis of the research findings showing a breakdown of what topics candidates are asking in each industry sector (see chart below) shows there are some subtle differences between sectors.

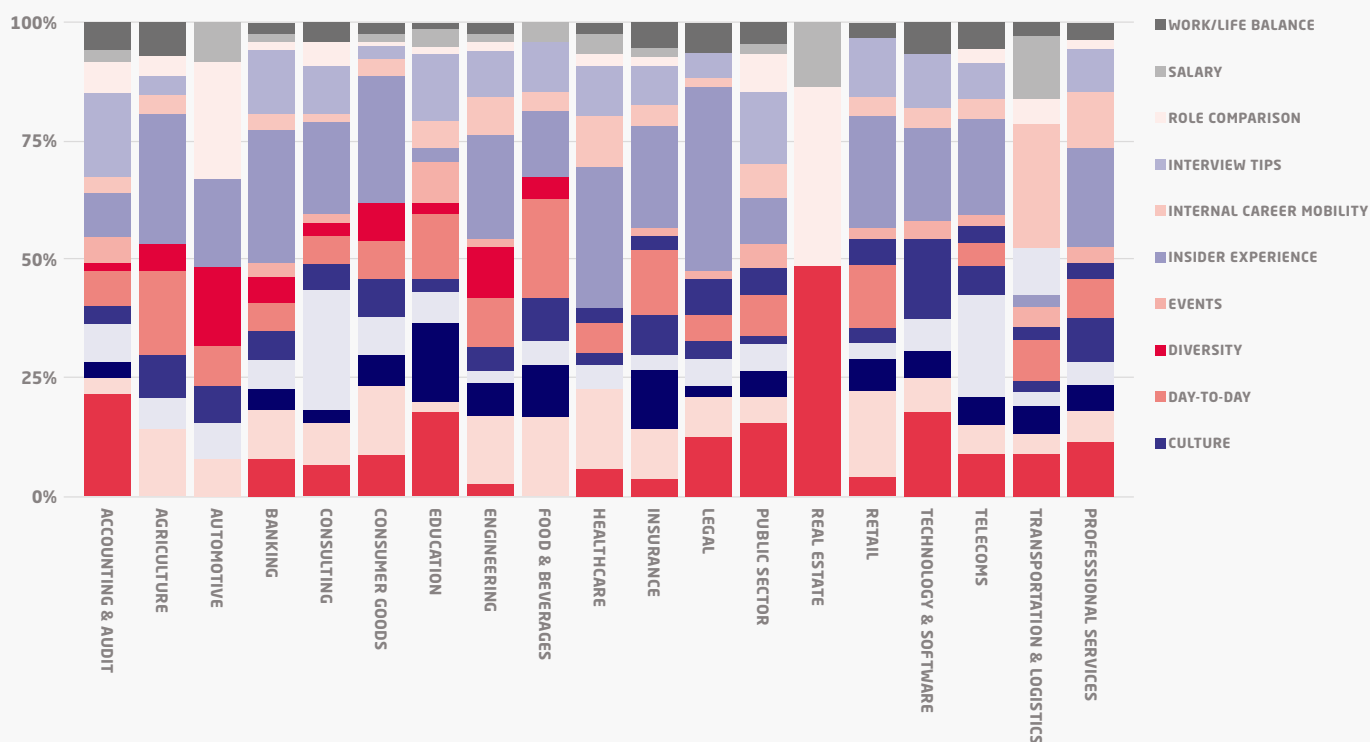
For example, Role Progression, Challenges and Company Information are three of the topics which candidate's ask the most questions about within the technology and software Industry whereas in the legal sector, diversity and career advice are two of the most prevalent topics which candidates want insights on. Similarly, Career Advice is an important topic for candidates to ask for in the Accounting and Audit sector.

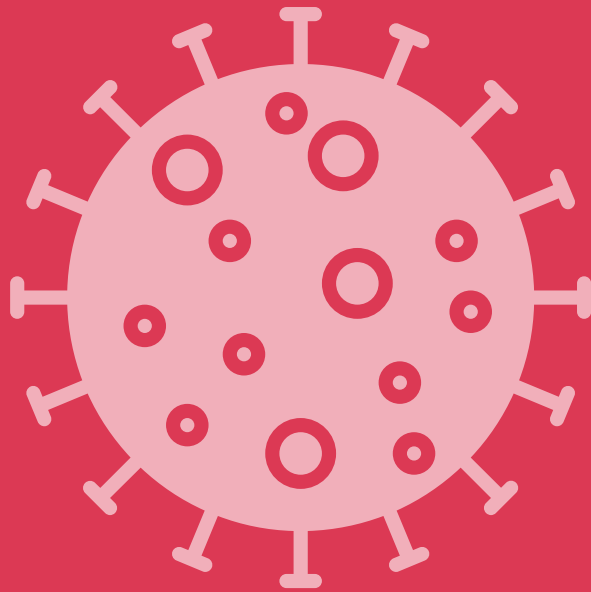
So candidates' interests vary sector by sector. Do not miss out on answering candidates questions on the top topics in your industry and use these insights to ensure you provide candidates with the opportunity to ask questions or read answers on these key topics.



Explore this graph to find out which topics candidates are most interested in for your sector to enhance your employer brand strategy messaging and content.

% of questions/views by topic



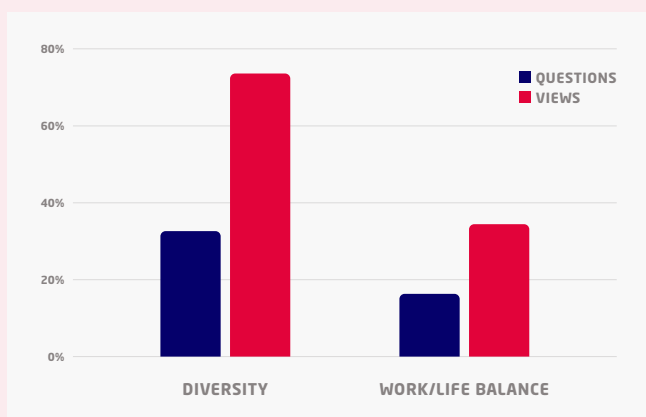


COVID-19 **IMPACT**

With the insights highlighted above from our research, we have assisted you in knowing what candidates want answers on and provided recommendations on the right capabilities and platforms for candidates to ask your company questions. However, we now have the added complexities of working and living in unprecedented times as a result of the COVID-19 global pandemic.

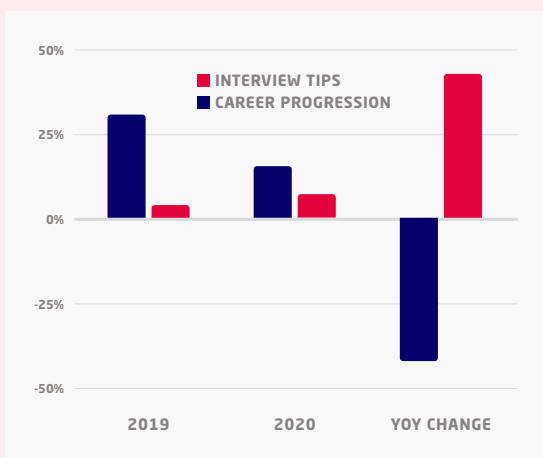
Here at PathMotion, we have seen in the more recent part of the research conducted in 2020, a 32% and 16% increase in candidate questions on discussions around work/life balance and diversity respectively, see chart below.

YoY change in views & questions between 2019 and 2020



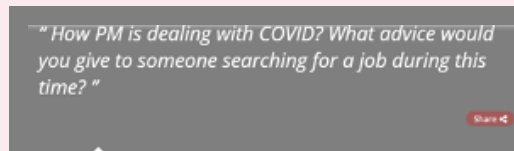
We also saw a 36% and 75% increase in viewing habits on these topics strikingly (although not surprisingly given the economic climate we now find ourselves in) interview tips decreased by 42% while Career progression increased by 43% (see chart below). This shows that you cannot stand still in obtaining insights into what candidates want to ask and get quick answers on, from your employees.

Change in views between 2019 and 2020



Most definitely some topics such as remote working culture, virtual team building, challenges on work/life balance, wellbeing etc. will inevitably grow however, generally speaking these insights we have highlighted will remain the same.

The world of generic static content is dead and wider areas to consider should also include timely topics. COVID is just one more example proving that content creation needs to be dynamic. For example, most recently, all employers have seen an uptake in various questions concerning the COVID-19 pandemic. We at PathMotion have seen this ourselves, such as the example question below:



If relevant to your companies' nature of business and interests, consider providing the big timely answers to those challenges - especially within booming sectors which have seen significant growth over recent months with the COVID-19 crisis such as, online entertainment, takeaway home delivery apps, food retail and logistics.

By preparing and putting into place answers on wider topics such as career advice, education and training programmes (designed to upskill employees), Interview tips and more, companies can future-proof their candidate pool and workforce. For instance, through advising them to become proficient in new programming languages and technology when entering the workplace and perhaps even in new roles they hadn't considered prior to the pandemic era.

The pandemic is making candidates worried and uncertain about the future, concerns on future jobs and the economy. Although no one can predict the future, now is the time for companies to reassure them and provide employee stories within the key topics candidates need to know about in order to be transparent, trustful and address the challenges, making the company appealing to apply and attract talent.

CONCLUSION

The world of generic static content is dead – content needs of a candidate are dynamic, so you need a way to **let candidates ask you questions regularly** to ensure you keep the content dynamic

Employees are best placed to answer questions so you need to let employees answer the questions – they are the one true single source of truth for candidates – you need to have a programme of ambassadors to increase candidate engagement

You need to let the content be available for everyone – All the answers need to be visible and shareable to all candidates as views (not just to those who ask the questions) to ensure you show transparency and work at scale ensuring some answers to questions that candidates are less likely to ask (e.g. challenging and sensitive questions) will be visible to all

In view of the above necessities, it's critical to allocate employer brand strategy and HR technology to tools that can enable the above, however do not avoid the following pitfalls:

- A)** Defining your EVP (Employee Value Proposition): as important as this is, in isolation it will not answer your granular questions
- B)** Use of employee testimonials and videos can be impactful but if you are not letting candidates ask the questions you run the risk of having employees' testimonials and videos on very general/static topics. This will not resonate on topics the candidates need to relate to and their dynamic content needs
- C)** Although there is a positive surge in emergence of live sessions, are you involving employees, and is the content available after the session for everyone? This is key to show transparency and to ensure content is available to everyone

About us

PathMotion is a discussion platform where employees engage and share stories with candidates. It generates trusted authentic content, which is used to enhance your employer brand and attract top talent, while reducing the workload for your talent attraction teams.

Organisations worldwide, and across 15+ sectors, use the platform, including universities, whose students engage with applicants in order to attract them.

Want to find out about how PathMotion can help in building dynamic content and sharing visibility to all using employees' insights?



or email meeting@pathmotion.com

80% OF CANDIDATES WOULD
RECOMMEND USING PATHMOTION